

ated. For one year, Bavaria shows 8 cases of smallpox, Saxony, 19. Great Britain does better for her colonies than for herself, for while in India during the seventeen years preceding 1886, 45,000 died of smallpox, in the seventeen succeeding years, 9126 died. On the European continent, Russia still shows the greatest proportion of cases, if Great Britain be excepted, and the result of vaccination in the Philippines has shown most satisfactory results.

Comparative Toxicity of Methyl and Ethyl Alcohol.—The occurrence of large numbers of fatal cases of methyl alcohol poisoning gives interest to the experiments of NICLOUX AND PLACET (*Jour. de Phys. et de Path. gén.*, September, 1912, vol. xiv, No. 5), with regard to its toxicity in comparison with ethyl alcohol. In a single large dose given intravenously methyl alcohol is the less toxic, but at death there is a greater proportion found in the blood and the tissues; of the tissues the brain is the most arid in fixing either form of alcohol. If the alcohol be ingested and repeated doses, methyl alcohol is the more toxic, because it is capable of less complete combustion, and is eliminated more slowly; a quarter of the methyl alcohol ingested is found to be in the excretions and the excretory organs. In spite of these facts, Nicloux and Placet considers that it is necessary to invoke the impurities of methyl alcohol to explain the numerous fatal cases unless it can be proved that man has a particular susceptibility to the action of the drug.

Bone Lesions in Skeletons of Ancient Peoples.—RUFFER AND RIETTI (*Journal of Pathology and Bacteriology*, April, 1912), publish the results of their examinations of ancient skeletons. The former had previously studied the histology of Egyptian mummies, and is deeply interested in the unusual field that is thus opened for investigation. Most of Ruffer and Rietti's good specimens will be placed in the Medical School Museum at Cairo, but a considerable number of bones will remain for distribution to recognized pathological institutes which may apply for the same. The earliest skeletons date from 3000 B.C., and show spondylitis deformans as well as other osteo-arthritic lesions in the hands, sacro-iliac articulations, hip-joints, and other parts. It is remarkable how numerous were the lesions of this type found in these skeletons; nor were the results very different when skeletons from the Roman period, 200 A.D., were examined, for here of 8 skeletons, no less than 4 showed marked lesions of arthritis deformans. Ruffer and Rietti find themselves unable to offer even a guess as to the etiology of these osteo-arthritic lesions. Should we ever discover more about the bacterial diseases of Ancient Egypt we shall perhaps be able to indicate the cause of this widespread disease. Ruffer and Rietti found a certain number of cases in the young, but point out that it was essentially a disease of old age, because, in hieroglyphic writing, the symbol of old age was a man deformed by chronic arthritis. Attention was paid to an attempt to determine the extent to which disease of the teeth prevailed in ancient times, and Ruffer and Rietti, after examination of a large number of skeletons, are of the opinion that there seems to have been much the same distribution of dental disease then as there is now. Although the Egyptians were learned in dentistry, there is evidence that they frequently failed to pull out teeth which prevented the exit of abscesses, for

Ruffer and Rietti have seen the results of abscesses which had ruptured through bone but for which no teeth had been removed, although such removal was most obviously indicated. No evidence is forthcoming from the present writers that the Egyptians knew anything about filling teeth, and they further state that they have only once seen ancient artificial teeth, which were found in a Roman tomb in Egypt. The contrivance consists of teeth bound together by gold wire, and was evidently for show purposes as it could not possibly have been used for mastication. The use of the tooth brush or some such instrument was evidently widespread, and the teeth in most cases showed evidence of careful attention, deposits of tartar being extremely infrequent.

The Pineal Body.—A review of the literature dealing recently with the pineal body is given in part in the *Medical Chronicle* for December, 1912, by L. J. KIDD. Some of the conclusions already made are as follows; there is a general belief that the pineal body is functional in all vertebrates and little evidence to show that it is a rudimentary, degenerated, or disappearing organ. Although there is no evidence that is sufficiently clear, it seems to be a fair assumption that it furnishes an internal secretion which probably in young birds and mammals at least, has an inhibitory action on the development of the testes and body growth, and on the appearance of secondary sexual characters. The relationship of the pineal glands to the ovaries is suggested but not yet proved: the relationship with the pituitary and the cortex of the adrenal is probable, but is yet uncertain. Involution of the pineal body occurs normally at puberty, but it is likely that the organ has other functions than these prepuberal effects. The histology of the organ with its neuroglial and connective tissue elements suggests definite specific function apart from that already stated.

Studies upon Pneumococcus.—From the Hospital of the Rockefeller Institute (*Jour. Exp. Med.*, November 1, 1912), comes an interesting series of studies upon pneumococcus to which brief reference may be made. COLE has studied the toxic substances produced by the pneumococcus, with the result that he finds that filtered blood serum of strongly infected animals is itself not necessarily toxic. Extracts from the organisms kept in salt solution for varying periods of time do not prove to be uniformly toxic, nor has Cole been able to discover the exact circumstances under which they prove so. Deaths from injection of such solutions suggested the results seen in acute anaphylaxis. The peritoneal washings of infected guinea-pigs injected into the circulation proved fatal in a considerable percentage of all cases, the symptoms again being those of acute anaphylaxis, which form of death becomes all but an absolute certainty when pneumococci are dissolved in solutions of bile salts and injected intravenously, a result which is probably due to the setting free of substances from the bacterial bodies in the rapid solution which the pneumococci undergo in bile at body temperature. DOCHÉZ has examined the protective substances to be found in the serum of patients recovering from pneumonia. He finds that the appearance of protective bodies in the blood may coincide fairly well with the time of crisis and the disappearance of symptoms. While they are not measurably in the blood before